

Whereas a number of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals are targeted and tortured or killed by paramilitary groups in Colombia and El Salvador, which operate in collusion with the military, police, and other government officials;

Whereas articles 2 and 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 2, 14, and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantee all individuals freedom from arbitrary discrimination and equal protection before the law;

Whereas in many countries arbitrary detention or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or conditions in detention directly result from the application of penal laws criminalizing same sex behavior between consenting adults, such as a 5-year sentence for private same sex behavior between consenting adults in Romania, and some of those individuals who have been convicted in Romania report torture, including rape, in prison, and all are unable to seek redress for abuses in detention;

Whereas in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia the sentence for same sex behavior between consenting adults includes "flogging" and in Singapore and Uganda the sentence for same sex behavior between consenting adults can extend to life in prison;

Whereas many governments, on the basis of vague laws, may target and persecute lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals: in the People's Republic of China individuals in these groups are imprisoned under laws against "hooliganism", in Argentina, individuals in these groups are imprisoned under the laws against "vagrants and crooks", and the vagueness of these laws makes it difficult to monitor governmental persecution;

Whereas articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 19 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantee all individuals freedom of expression and freedom of association;

Whereas the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and association are violated when governments deny the right of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals to form organizations or advocate for rights, such as in Zimbabwe where members of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) have been threatened and brutally assaulted;

Whereas in some countries agents of the government are directing or are complicitous in abuses committed on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and investigations and prosecution of those agents for violations often do not occur;

Whereas due to failure by governments to investigate and prosecute human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity, private individuals feel encouraged to violently attack lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals with impunity, contributing to the atmosphere of fear and intimidation;

Whereas lesbians and bisexual women who suffer human rights violations are often abused because of their sexual orientation while their gender often incites, compounds, and aggravates this abuse, and, moreover, since their gender is not recognized as a factor, their abuse often goes unrecorded;

Whereas violations of internationally recognized human rights norms are to be considered crimes regardless of the status of the victims and are to be punished without discrimination;

Whereas fundamental access to legal protection from violations of internationally recognized human rights norms is often unavailable to the victims;

Whereas lesbians and bisexual women face additional obstacles in these countries when seeking assistance from police, judges, and other officials due to pervasive gender bias;

Whereas the preceding clauses constitute only a few examples of the violations suffered by lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered individuals, the full range and extent of such violations are not known because governments create an atmosphere of immunity for those perpetrating such human rights violations and prevent victims from seeking effective protection and just redress and thus their suffering remains undocumented and unremedied; and

Whereas many nongovernmental human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, as well as the United States Department of State and the United Nations, have documented, and are continuing to document, the ongoing violations of the human rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns all violations of internationally recognized human rights norms based on the real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual, and commends nongovernmental human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, as well as the United States Department of State and the United Nations, for documenting the ongoing abuse of human rights on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity; and

(2)(A) recognizes that human rights violations abroad based on sexual orientation and gender identity should be equally punished without discrimination and equally classified as crimes, regardless of the status of the victims and that such violations should be given the same consideration and concern as human rights violations based on other grounds in the formulation of policies to protect and promote human rights globally; and

(B) further recognizes that the protection of sexual orientation and gender identity is not a special category of human rights, but it is fully embedded in the overall human rights norms defined in international conventions.

REGIONAL PARTIES WIN IN INDIA; INDIA'S DISINTEGRATION AP- PEARS CLOSER

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, recently regional parties won elections in two states in India. Neither the ruling BJP nor the opposition Congress Party was able to pull off a complete victory.

These results only increase the instability that already plagues India. To retain control of the government, the BJP had to assemble a coalition of 24 parties. Clearly, the days when a national party could dominate India's government are gone.

While the political instability increases, there are 17 independence movements within India's borders. Many experts on the situation in South Asia have predicted the disintegration of India. From these results it looks like that disintegration is closer.

America is a country founded on the idea of freedom. I urge President Clinton to raise the issue of freeing the political prisoners during his upcoming visit to India. I also urge him to bring up the question of self-determination. It is time to speak out for freedom.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN SKERKER

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor and congratulate a good friend as she marks the end of her journey with Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan.

Twenty-seven years ago, Susan Skerker embarked upon a career in the auto industry that would lead her down many paths and face-to-face with many challenges, not least of which was helping to steer Ford through an ever-changing global market place.

Susan has distinguished herself as a leader in the auto industry and as such has led one of Ford's major corporate headquarters staffs. She has served as the Director of the Worldwide Government Affairs Public Policy office and worked closely with those of us in Michigan who know why Detroit is called Motor City.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Michigan Congressional delegation, I am pleased to recognize Susan and acknowledge that her efforts on behalf of the company and the industry are thought of most highly. Susan has been a true friend, one I could trust to give me good advice about everything from air bags to global warming. Her knowledge and insight have been invaluable to me in representing the 16th Congressional District in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, as Susan's family and friends gather to celebrate her many accomplishments and the closing of this chapter of her life, I wanted to share with my colleagues just how much Susan's service and friendship have meant to me.

One leg of Susan's journey has come to an end, but around the bend a new one awaits. I wish Susan every happiness and continued success in all she does.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH PARISI, SR.

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the deeds of a person I am proud to call my friend, Joseph Parisi, Sr., of Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, who is being feted today because of his many years of service and leadership. It is only fitting that we